(b) if so, whether Indian Space Research Organisation has made any commercial agreement with any foreign company as annual market of space research is worth more than one billion dollars; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the efforts being made to give pace to the commercial activities of ISRO?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Indian Space Research Organisation through its marketing arms Antrix Corporation has made commercial agreements with EADS Astrium of Europe to jointly manufacture and supply two commercial communication satellites to Europe. A contract was made for launching an Italian Satellite 'AGILE', which was successfully launched into space on 23 April, 2007. In addition, agreements have been signed for launching three other foreign satellites. Commercial agreements are also made for marketing data from Indian remote sensing satellites in different parts of the globe including USA, Europe, China, Russia and other countries. In order to give pace to commercial activities of ISRO, the Government is encouraging Antrix Corporation to promote the commercial use of capacity available from space systems built by ISRO after meeting the national needs and also develop alliances for global marketing of Indian Space capabilites.

Reliability, accuracy and adequacy of primary level data collection

3944. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have been seized of the concern expressed *inter alia* by the Chairman of national Statistical Commission in a Conference recently, about weaknesses in the reliablity, accuracy and adequacy of primary level data collection and processing leading to erroneous planning and assessment of the socio-economic situations;

(b) if so, the steps taken/being contemplated to address such concern;

(c) whether any assessment of the state of affairs at each State level statistical data collection and analysis machineries with a view to improve

upon the same have been carried out;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI G.K. VASAN): (a) The Chairman, National Statistical Commission while discussing about the primary data collection process in the recent Conference of Centre and State Statistical Organizations, had stated that weakness at this basic level translate to unreliable, inadequate and inaccurate statistics undermining their usefulness.

(b) In order to strengthen the statistical system including the quality of official statistics the following steps have been taken:

1. To facilitate better collection of primary statistics, the Collection of Statistics Act, 1953 is being amended.

2. The National Statistical Commission is also mandated to evolve national strategies for the collection, tabulation and dissemination of core statistics.

3. The Ministry has initiated a project aimed at strengthening the State Statistical Systems as part of India Statistical Strengthening Project (ISSP)

4. As the primary data mostly flow from the States, in order to ensure greater coordination between Central and State agencies, the Conference of Centre and State Statistical Organization have been institutionalized and senior level Indian Statistical Service (ISS) Officers have been posted in the States.

(c) and (d) One of the components of the India Statistical Strengthening Project is the study for identifying the specific requirements for strengthening of the State Statistical Bureaus. The study is aimed at documenting the statistical activities of the Directorate of Economics & Statistics (DES) assessing the efficacy of their resource allocations and developing a comprehensive proposal for strengthening the State Statistical System. The study has been planned to be conducted in two phases. The first phase comprising of assessing of the existing statistical activities of

the Directorate of Economics & Statistics and line Departments of States/ UTs and thirty five detailed Reports have been produced. In the second phase, the study would consolidate the specific requirements of each State for achieving a minimum standard for a common set of statistical output and evolve an action plan for implementation along with costing and other details.

(e) Does not arise.

Doubling of costs of projects

†3945. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of such under construction projects under different Ministries whose final cost of construction are estimated to double the cost of their sanctioned cost;

(b) the main reason of projects not getting completed in the prescribed time and according to the expectations;

(c) whether some steps are being taken to resolve these reasons; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI G.K. VASAN): (a) The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation monitors the implementation status of 860 central sector projects costing Rs. 20 crore and above for 16 core sectors only. As per the Database available with this Ministry, as on 1.1.2007, for 55 ongoing projects of various sectors, the anticipated costs are double or more than that of the original approved cost.

(b) The main reasons for delay include fund constraints, delay in land acquisition and rehabilitation, delay in award of contracts slow progress of construction by the contractors, law and order problems, delay in equipment supply, delay in Environment and other clearances, geological surprises, etc.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.